



Session update from Olympia

April 1 , 2011

Radiological Monitoring in Spokane

After the disaster in Japan, many of us are understandably on heightened alert about the possibility of exposure to radiation. This week's news about the infinitely small level of radiation in milk in Spokane is bound to trigger these concerns.

People in Spokane should use their own judgment in how they respond to the news, but it's important to keep in mind that the level detected today is many orders of magnitude below that which would pose a threat to human health, including infants.

I am committed to continuing to work with our federal, state and local health partners to ensure that citizens in our area remain fully informed of the most scientifically accurate data regarding radiation testing in Spokane County and our state.

For more information you can read a joint statement from the EPA/FDA [here](#). A statement from Governor Gregoire can be read [here](#).

Helping Students into Aerospace Careers

More state residents will be able to receive valuable training at the Washington Aerospace Training and

Contact Information:

Olympia Office:

307 Legislative Building

By Postal Mail:

Senator Lisa Brown
PO Box 40403
Olympia, WA 98504-0403

By Phone:

Olympia Office: (360) 786-7604

Spokane Office: (509) 456-2760

Toll-free legislative hotline:
1-800-562-6000

TTY/TDD Hearing impaired
hotline: 1-800-635-9993

Research Center, thanks to legislation signed into law last week by Gov. Gregoire.

[House Bill 1846](#), like its Senate companion legislation, is designed to boost the number of students in aerospace vocational training programs by providing short-term, low-interest loans to cover all or part of tuition at the Paine Field center and, when it opens, the Spokane Aerospace Technology Center as well. The bill passed the Senate unanimously.

Aerospace graduates find employment at a hiring rate of 85 percent, but hundreds of high-wage jobs still go unfilled because schools cannot graduate enough students to meet demand. A lot of people do not realize that Spokane and the Inland Northwest are home to more than 60 manufacturers, suppliers, distributors and organizations related to the aerospace industry.

To be eligible, students must be registered for a training program, be making satisfactory progress in the course and have declared the intention of working in the aerospace industry in Washington.

Recognizing Legal Unions from other States

The domestic partnerships of couples who have entered into legal unions in other states or countries would also be recognized in Washington under legislation passed Wednesday by the Senate.

[House Bill 1649](#), passed on a 28-19 vote, would recognize only those aspects of legal unions that are recognized by the laws of Washington and would not accept or honor any provisions outside existing state law.

This legislation simplifies and clarifies the status and rights of couples who have established legal unions under laws similar to ours here in Washington, much the way couples who have been married in other states are considered married when they come to Washington state.

Under state law, state-registered domestic partnerships may occur when two people: share a common residence;

E-mail:

lisa.brown@leg.wa.gov

Web site:

<http://senatedemocrats.wa.gov/senators/brown>

For staff contact information click [here](#)

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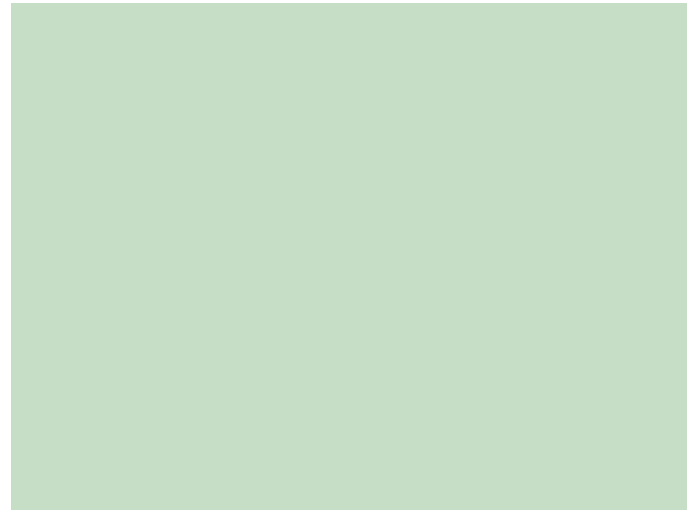
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are at least 18 years of age; are not married to someone other than the other person and are not in a state-registered partnership with another person; are capable of consenting to the domestic partnership; are not nearer of kin to each other than second cousins or related in other ways; and are either members of the same sex or at least one of the persons is at least 62 years of age.



Green Lawns, Clean Water Bill

[HB 1489](#) is my seatmate Representative Billig's prime sponsored bill to limit phosphorus in lawn fertilizers. This legislation will directly improve water quality in the Spokane River, not to mention many water bodies throughout our state. Last week the Senate approved HB 1489, and today the House concurred with some changes that were made in the Senate to the bill. I applaud Representative Billig for demonstrating such strong leadership and enjoyed working with him to ensure our region's most valuable environmental resource is protected. In my late January update I said that I wanted to see this bill go all the way to the Governor's desk this year, and that is exactly where it has been sent!

Keeping Up with the Legislature through Technology



[Click here to watch my interview on Comcast Newsmakers with Steve Mumm.](#)

Each week I hold a media availability session where I update members of the press on what the Senate is working on and take questions. If you would like to listen to this week's media availability session click [here](#), and a recap of the session can be heard by clicking [here](#). Remember to check out the Senate Democrats' [podcast](#)

“In the Loop” for a summary of the week’s events or visit us on twitter [@WASenDemocrats](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Click [here](#) for contact information for my Olympia or Spokane office.

